

**By Gen. Charles T. "Tony" Robertson Jr.**  
*Commander, Air Mobility Command*

As our Air Force moves into the 21st century as an Expeditionary Aerospace Force, the dedicated men and women of Air Mobility Command are once again in the forefront of the transition.

Today and every day, AMC's Total Force team — active, Guard and Reserve, along with our commercial partners — are providing, deploying, sustaining and redeploying forces associated with our Air Force's Aerospace Expeditionary Forces and on-call Aerospace Expeditionary Wings ... to deployment locations around the world.

So what does EAF mean to you ... personally? Well, first let me say that AMC is fully committed to the EAF. We bring to the EAF construct a broad spectrum of capabilities essential to the success of the EAF concept and its promise for our Air Force. Already, each of AMC's deployable expeditionary combat support personnel — such as chaplains, civil engineers, comptrollers, and security forces — have been assigned to one of the ten AEFs or two AEWs.

If you fall into this category, when your AEF or AEW enters its 90-day deployment window, once every 15 months, your task is to be available and ready to support one of our Air Force's steady state deployments, such as Operation Northern Watch in Turkey or Operation Southern Watch in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, or UAE. If you end up not tasked to actually deploy during your eligibility period, your job is to remain ready to respond to small pop-up contingencies during that period.

Then — one of the real "promises of AEF" for you — after your 90-day eligibility period, whether you deployed or not, you will enter a twelve month reconstitution and training cycle that is designed to ready you for your next AEF "window."

In September, as our Air Force evolved into the EAF concept, most of our people still deployed in support of AEFs one and two under an Air Force tasking program called Palace Tenure. Those deployers are now being relieved by Palace Tenure augmentees for AEFs three and four.

In AMC, we've attempted to align the schedules of AMC people on these deployments with the formal AEF structure ... our intent being to give all these people "AEF credit" so they are not deployed again for a steady state requirement in this first 15-month AEF cycle. Hopefully, after this current round of deployments, we will be able to phase-out Palace Tenure as our Expeditionary Combat Support sourcing method and transition to a longer-term and more predictable AEF scheduling process.

Many of our tanker and most of our C-130 operations and maintenance squadrons have been tied directly to the individual AEFs and the AEWs as well. For example, each of our C-130 squadrons has been scheduled, for as far out as two years into the future, to deploy in support of standing contingency requirements around the world ... to Ramstein AB, Germany; to Muniz International Airport, Puerto Rico; and to various locations in Southwest Asia.

We have likewise identified specific tanker squadrons to support the various AEW requirements and to provide the leadership required for each AEF pair. During their deployments,

## The forefront of the EAF transition

our tanker crews and maintainers will operate out of Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia; Al Dhafra, UAE; Incirlik AB, Turkey; Istres, France; and Keflavik, Iceland.

In addition to the leadership we deploy with our aviation units, AMC also provides the AEF leadership elements required to facilitate our Air Force's response to the steady stream of humanitarian crises and disasters that pop-up around the world.

Five AMC wings have been designated by the Air Force as Lead Mobility Wings. They are the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope AFB, N.C.; the 60th Air Mobility Wing at Travis AFB, Calif.; the 22nd Air Refueling Wing at McConnell AFB, Kan.; the 319th ARW at Grand Forks AFB, N.D. and the 92nd ARW at Fairchild AFB, Wash.

These LMWs have the capability to field strong leadership elements and, along with our Global Reach Laydown personnel, will provide the initial response teams that will deploy on short notice to disasters worldwide.

Some of AMC's people are not specifically aligned with an AEF or AEW but yet remain key players in the EAF and essential to its support. This is certainly the case for our strategic mobility and Global Reach Laydown people. These are the folks — the "Enablers" if you will — who give our AEFs and AEWs their actual ability to respond to calls from around the world.

For example, in the deployments of AEFs one and two, our Total Force team moved nearly 2,000 passengers and 1,000 short tons of cargo in 20 days. In addition, our tanker forces, in their intertheater role, supported the movement of nearly 100 fighters.

As we move into the rotation of AEFs three and four in December, and AEFs five and six in March, we expect this level of effort will increase, but as the Air Force continues to embrace and adapt to the AEF concept, we also expect this very predictable deployment and redeployment cycle will settle out at a much lower requirement than existed pre-EAF.

Besides providing our theater commanders with a very powerful and responsive tool, transitioning to the EAF brings with it a host of benefits to the men and women of AMC. One of the many benefits is increased integration of our Total Force into our day-to-day operation.

With a firm schedule for the AEF rotations published well in advance, we will be able to make much better use of the volunteerism of our Guard and Reserve brothers and sisters to support our steady state TDY commitments, such as Operations Joint Forge and Southern Watch. In fact, our Air Reserve Component teammates have committed to fill up to 10 percent of our steady-state ECS requirements under the EAF construct.

For AMC, the reserve component aviation contribution is more than 40 percent of our present day C-130 requirements and over a third of our tanker requirements. This increased sharing of the workload will not only pay big dividends in helping us meet our AEF and other global commit-

ments, it should also help reduce the personnel tempo load that the schedule uncertainty of pre-AEF operations laid almost exclusively on the Active Force.

Also contributing to reduced PERSTEMPO will be the addition of over 700 new manpower authorizations at AMC's bases. These authorizations have been carefully allocated to help compensate units for their long-standing deployment commitments.

People have already begun to fill these positions, and hopefully will soon begin to reduce the impact on our base support units when they are tasked to deploy various elements in support of the AEFs.

Perhaps the greatest EAF benefit though, and the one I've already mentioned above, is the greater stability and predictability that the AEF schedule will bring to deployable AMC people and their families.

AMC's number-one asset is, and always will be, its people. Our vision is that alignment with an AEF or AEW will ultimately allow you to plan as much as a year in advance for the longer duration, steady-state rotations. You should also know when you will be first in line for those short-notice contingency deployments that have come to be an integral part of today's Expeditionary Air Force lifestyle.

But the predictability and stability go even beyond our AEF-designated forces. The EAF also offers predictability and stability to our intertheater and GRL forces. Before EAF, the Air Force Personnel Center would source requirements for steady-state deployments individually through the major commands.

Transitioning to the EAF allows us to identify and deploy integral teams and avoid the "pick-up game" that resulted from our former individual taskings. By identifying these teams well ahead of time, the supported CINCs can build their steady-state rotation schedules sooner, allowing our planners to build our strategic lift schedules well in advance as well.

Not only will these schedules give us greater "organic" predictability, they will also allow us to make more extensive use of contract lift and to maximize the participation of our Total Force partners, allowing for much more efficient use of our strategic forces.

"Stability and predictability" will also allow our wings' leadership to better manage upgrade training, professional military education, and leave requirements, so you can receive the training you need, the professional development you require, and the time you deserve with family and friends.

The EAF holds great promise for our Air Force and for AMC. When the transition is complete, we will have a new, much more efficient way to meet the Air Force's steady state requirements as well as to respond to global contingencies. We have come along way in making the transition possible and I am very proud of our progress.

That said, the journey continues, and much work remains, to squeeze the last ounce of promise out of EAF, for you and yours.

Perhaps the greatest EAF benefit though, and the one I've already mentioned above, is the greater stability and predictability that the AEF schedule will bring to deployable AMC people and their families.

Just as you always do, I know the dedicated men and women of AMC are ready to meet this challenge. AMC's Total Force team is ready and will continue to be in the forefront as the Air Force continues to refine its transition into the Expeditionary Aerospace Force.



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